



EU MINOR USES COORDINATION FACILITY

Newsletter

No. 12, Oct-Nov-Dec 2019

Minor uses, major issue!



Editorial

The last quarter of 2019 was again a busy period. The MUCF organised successful ‘autumn-meetings’ of minor uses experts in Dublin and the Minor Uses Steering Group was held in November. The MUCF attended several international meetings and conferences. Details of these events are given in this newsletter.

The Coordination Facility has made good progress in 2019. Based on the results of the 2019 survey more than 6 000 minor uses needs, and their priorities are now listed in EUMUDA. All this information is easily accessible and publicly available for all stakeholders. In total, more than 100 projects have been entered in EUMUDA since 2017.

The Coordination Facility has also started to work on new activities: the development of a new extrapolation database for minor uses with EPPO and investigations are underway on the best way to display information on solutions in EUMUDA.

Despite the uncertainty on the future of the MUCF we are working hard to plan activities for 2020.

February will be dominated by the Minor Uses Workshop that will be held in Paris. Together with the organising committee we are in the process of planning this major event. In a nutshell, the Workshop will gather key stakeholders and policy makers to exchange on their experience and expectations on minor uses work and on the MUCF. The aim will be to define the future organisation of minor uses work in Europe, to enhance regulatory harmonization, and establish a roadmap containing a list of concrete European actions.

The second meeting of all countries who have committed funding for the Coordination Facility, the ‘Annual General Meeting’, is planned for end of February. In March all Commodity Expert Groups will meet in Brussels.

IR-4 is the longest running minor uses project globally. What are the barriers and challenges IR-4 is facing in the US? What is their view on how the work on minor uses is organised in Europe and the role the MUCF is playing?

Dan Kunkel, the Senior Associate Director at the IR-4 Project, reflects on these and other topics in an interview in this newsletter.

The year 2020 will be the second year that the Coordination Facility will fully rely on voluntary assessed contributions from member countries. Although we already have received commitments from several countries, we need contributions from more countries to continue minor uses work in a sustainable way.

I would like to thank all minor uses experts for their hard work in 2019 to take the issue of minor uses forward. Together we can achieve great results. Your contributions are highly appreciated.

With my best wishes for the New Year!

Jeroen Meeussen,
Coordinator of the MUCF

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European minor uses needs and priorities - update

Identification of plant protection problems on speciality crops is a key step in solving minor uses issues. Member countries have updated or declared their minor uses needs and have set priorities under the 2019 survey conducted by the MUCF. In total, data is now available from 28 Member countries (25 EU Member States, plus Norway, Switzerland and Macedonia).

The updated list on needs and priorities is available on EUMUDA:

https://eumuda.minoruses.eu/database/table_minor_uses.

Overview on needs and priorities

The individual needs with priority score allocated are provided in the ‘detailed table of needs’

There are in total 3087 grouped needs (same need for several countries). They are displayed in the ‘main table of needs’.

The top 3 needs in Europe are:

1. Raspberry/ spotted wing drosophila (*Drosophila suzukii*)
2. Carrot/ carrot fly (*Chamaepsila rosae*)
3. Strawberry/ spotted wing drosophila (*Drosophila suzukii*)

The top 10 European needs are displayed in Figure 1. The graphs (bar charts) on main European priorities and per CEG are also available on EUMUDA

Main European priorities- 2019 update

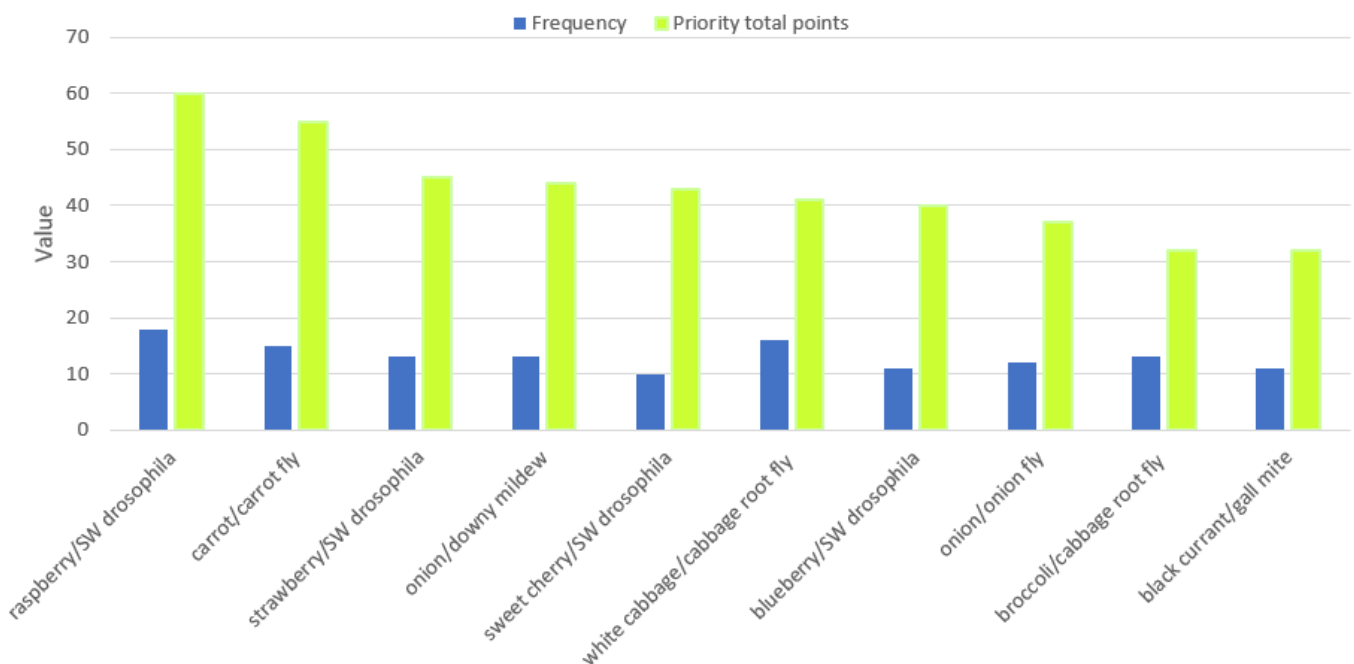


Figure 1: Main European priorities on minor uses needs-2019 update

It is noted that these top needs mainly concern insect pests (flies and a mite) in fruits and vegetables, with the exception of downy mildew on onion. Countries from all three regulatory zones (Southern, Central and Northern zones) have declared these needs.

The majority of the needs relate to Fruits and Vegetables (84%), followed by Ornamentals (8%).

The information from the main table of needs can also be sorted by function type (acaricide, insecticide, fungicide, etc.). The main pest groups are insects (46%), fungi (30%) and weeds (14%).

A new feature is that there is now the possibility to filter the information per regulatory zones.

Progress on solving of needs in EUMUDA

Another step in the process of solving minor uses needs is retrieving information on authorisation of plant protection products in European countries. This information is obtained by the MUCF from the Homologa database. In 2019 the MUCF conducted (mass scale) Homologa searches based on the needs declared by the countries in 2019. Results are displayed in Excel files with pivot tables providing an overview of products authorisations per regulatory zone, country, active substance. Results are available to minor uses experts on a EUMUDA page (with restricted access).

The **status of each need** is available in the detailed table of needs and has been updated ([click here to access the detailed table of needs](#)). It is now possible to see whether for a particular need, there are registrations in Europe: 'Database (Homologa) search conducted- registrations found in Europe'.

For 15 needs, it is also now possible to see if the need has been **solved** with one or several plant protection solutions. You can retrieve information on solved needs in the detailed table of needs, using the column 'priority score' entering score '0' or using the column 'status' entering 'solved'.

For example, in Belgium, the needs with grey mould (*Botryotinia fuckeliana*) on raspberry and gooseberry have been resolved with the plant protection product LUNA SENSATION. In Latvia, the need with phytophthora (*Phytophthora rubi*) on raspberry, has been resolved with the products ALIETTE and PRESTROP (a microbial).

Although there is progress on displaying information on the solving of minor uses needs, a lot of information still has to be completed. This work can only be done with the cooperation of national minor uses contact points, members of the Commodity Expert Groups and project leaders.

Emergency authorisations

Emergency authorisations of plant protection products can be granted under the provisions of Article 53 of Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2009 : *'By way of derogation from Article 28, in special circumstances a Member State may authorise, for a period not exceeding 120 days, the placing on the market of plant protection products, for limited and controlled use, where such a measure appears necessary because of a danger which cannot be contained by any other reasonable means'*.

The information on emergency authorisations granted is available on PPPAMS. Over the years there has been an increase in the number of emergency authorisations.

This is closely followed by NGOs and has attracted political attention. A considerable number of emergency authorisations also concern minor uses. Therefore, the MUCF is planning to look closely at the link between minor uses needs and uses granted under Article 53 as solving minor uses needs can reduce the number of emergency authorisations.

Autumn minor uses meetings

The autumn Minor Uses Experts Groups were (as in 2017) kindly hosted by our Irish colleagues, in Dublin castle. From 30 October to 1 November, the meetings of the Horizontal Expert Group (HEG), and of the Commodity Expert Groups (CEG) on Fruits & Vegetables, Herbs, Ornamentals, Seeds, Tobacco, Mushrooms and Hops took place.

The MUCF provided information on its financial situation, on minor uses needs and priorities, and on results from Homologa searches.

There have been changes in the Chairs and co-Chairs of several Commodity Expert Groups. An updated list will soon be placed on the minor uses website.



Meeting in Dublin Castle

Feedback Horizontal expert group

The HEG was well attended with 36 participants and discussed a variety of topics.

The Guidance Document on Minor Uses provides more clarity regarding the rules for authorisation of minor uses and contributes to further harmonisation between Member States. At the July 2019 meeting of the Standing Committee Member States were invited to comment on the draft by 1 October 2019. Comments received were mainly editorial and were discussed in the HEG. Based on the additional comments received an updated revision of the Guidance Document will be prepared early 2020.

In the Guidance Document on Minor Uses it is mentioned that ‘*the use of the draft Registration Report should be considered*’. Several Member States have gained experience with the evaluation of Article 51 application using the dRR-format. Participants shared their experiences with this format and discussed whether further improvements are needed. The MUCF wants to encourage the acceptance of extrapolation possibilities in collaboration with EPPO who has started to develop a searchable database for efficacy/crop safety extrapolation. In due course this database will be expanded for residue extrapolations.

Feedback CEG Mushrooms

CEG Mushrooms discussed two projects against the fungus *Dactylium dendroides*

- In one project it appears that after two rounds of trials with different doses, residue analyses on spent compost seem too high, knowing that spent compost can be used as fertilizer on fields. So this project is likely to be stopped.
- In the other project tests are ongoing in France and Spain to test the efficacy of several new active substances. The results should be available in Spring 2020.

The group also discussed the problems caused by active substances that could be found in cultivated fungi due to straw from cereals (treated in compliance with regulations) being used to make compost.

Feedback CEG Hops

It was agreed to classify two projects under ‘termination before completion’ in EUMUDA as the respective active substances are no longer supported by the respective companies. Two new projects will be added to EUMUDA.

After the recent appearance of Citrus Bark Cracking Viroid (CBCVd) in German hop cultivation, this issue was thoroughly discussed within the group. All CEG members, including Slovenia, where the viroid has been infecting hops for a decade now, unanimously supported an approach to classify CBCVd in future as Regulated Non-Quarantine Pest (RNQP) within the EU. The same classification should also become effective EU-wide regarding Hop Stunt Viroid (HpSVd) and Apple Mosaic Virus (ApMV).

The CEG remains highly concerned about the continuing loss of active ingredients within the EU. The danger of losing too many active ingredients for an adequate hop production within the EU is imminent and has even increased in 2019. Plant protection in hop cultivation was also topic of a ‘Global Hop Summit’, convened on 18th November 2019 in Brussels.

Feedback CEG Fruits and Vegetables

The CEG F&V was led by the new chairs, Jean-Claude Malet and Bolette Palte Neve. The group thanked Ingeborg Koch and Ann De Cock the former chairs, for their work.

The group discussed a new proposal for the organisation of the work and the expectations of group members. Examples were provided on how projects can progress outside of meetings.

Jose Luis Alonso Prados presented the process that Spain used to propose new MRL extrapolation from major to minor crops. New proposals from other Member States will be summarised.

Updates on ongoing projects were provided by project leaders and new projects proposed. These will be added to the agenda for the next meeting (aphids, weeds in tree fruit, weeds in vegetables).

A common meeting with the CEG seeds was organised to share plans for seed treatment efficacy trials in different Member States.

Feedback CEG Seeds

Representatives of two companies joined the meeting by teleconference to update the CEG Seeds on the European renewal status of several active ingredients and their national product developments for seed treatment and seed production. This was followed by a discussion on active ingredients and products, both chemical and biological, of other crop protection companies. Going through the list of approved active ingredients the CEG Seeds once more concluded that the possibilities for seed treatment and protection of seed production crops are decreasing and effective control of several pests (including pathogens) is at stake.

Discussing the treatment possibilities for very specific minor crops (e.g. parsnip, radish, different types of celery, chard, kohlrabi) it was noted that each Member State has its own national crop grouping list and it could be helpful to add the links to these national cropping lists to EUMUDA. This can help to check which crops are included / excluded when there is an authorisation for a certain crop in a certain country. The CEG Fruits & Vegetables supported this idea and it was proposed to the MUCF.

Furthermore, in the joint meeting with CEG Fruits & Vegetables several trial results of seed and soil treatments for disease and for insect control in vegetables from 2019 were shared.

The CEG Seeds discussed the results of the MUCF’s 2019 survey on minor uses needs and priorities, as well as the results of several Homologa searches. After the meeting some more extensive Homologa searches were done to try to collect more information on authorized products for seed treatment and seed production outside Europe, in order to identify possibilities for new seeds projects.

Feedback CEG Herbs

CEG Herbs met for the second time as a 'Candidate Commodity Expert Group' now with Benjamin Lemaire as the new Chair.

The group expects to be able to exchange information and data efficiently. Minor cultures may be of less economic importance for the big plant protection companies, but when growers in different countries start working together, the consolidation of the cultivated acreage may result in a win-win situation. The main problem for CEG Herbs is "residues". Often extrapolations from lettuce or spinach are used, but these are not always accepted by the authorities. An update was provided on the ongoing projects and some new topics were launched.

Feedback CEG Ornamentals

Helma Verberkt succeeded Bruno Gobin as the Chair of the CEG Ornamentals. Various topics were discussed in this meeting: an overview of authorized products and trials with plant growth regulators in the different Member States, Fusarium trials in Belgium and Denmark, information about worker exposure data in EU (minimum re-entry times to the treated crop area for workers after application of plant protection products) and the situation of disinfection products in EU. Some possible new projects were also discussed: white fly, bacterial diseases, soil-borne diseases and downy mildew problems.

Feedback CEG Tobacco

CEG Tobacco discussed new registrations and extensions of use since the last meeting in March 2019. A new fungicide, ORVEGO was registered for tobacco blue mould protection in Germany. BENEVIA, an insecticide was registered against potato beetle for potato crop in Germany and this leads to an expectation for the future use on tobacco. Three plant protection products obtained an extension of use in Germany: a fungicide (FORUM) against blue mould, a herbicide (LENTAGRAN) for weed control after planting and an insecticide (PIRIMOR GRANULAT) against aphids. In Germany, the insecticide, PLENUM 50 WG, used against aphids was withdrawn in April 2019. The following new projects were discussed. Fifteen projects were identified on tobacco crop protection: two for weeds control, one for broomrape, two for botrytis in seedbeds, three for blue mould, one for aphids, one for *Epitrix*, three for budworms and two for suckers' control. They are implemented in 4 countries: Italy, Germany, France and Spain.

Steering Group Meeting

A meeting of the Minor Uses Steering Group was held on 20 November 2019 in Brussels. The meeting was attended by representatives from the member countries (Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland), as well as a representative from the European Commission, the Director-General of EPPO and the coordinator of MUCF.

The main point of discussion was the financial situation of the MUCF and the budget for 2020. At the time of the meeting commitments had been received up to an amount of EUR 280 000 (EUR 95 000 received, and EUR 185 000 committed).

Several Member States have been approached by the MUCF for a meeting with representatives of their respective ministries. These meetings will be planned for early 2020. Finland, that has the current presidency of the Council of the EU, has taken the initiative to discuss the long-term funding of the MUCF as any other business (AOB) point in the December meeting of the AGRIFISH Council. Already a considerable number of Member States have shown support for the Finnish initiative.

As actions/initiatives to raise funding for 2020 are still ongoing (recently Portugal and Cyprus also committed to contribute for 2020), the outcome of the Council discussion is not yet known, and the carry-over from 2019 is not yet clear, the Steering Group decided to postpone a decision on the 2020 budget for the MUCF to early February 2020. Based on the advice of the Steering Group the Annual General Meeting (AGM) has to approve the budget for 2020 for the MUCF at their meeting which will be scheduled for the end of February.

To have a more balanced Steering Group a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic was nominated to represent the Central and Eastern European Countries in the Minor Uses Steering Group. The Steering Group will forward this nomination to the AGM.

The Steering Group also approved the revised policy on the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses. From January 2020 onwards there will be no reimbursement for experts attending meetings.

The MUCF has prepared a document emphasizing the benefits of the work of the Coordination Facility for Member States and different stakeholder groups (governments, growers, industry, research, general public). The document can serve as a background document, but for communication purposes the MUCF will start developing e.g. separate leaflets for the different stakeholder groups.

Workshop on Minor Uses and Speciality crops - 18-20 February 2020

As announced in the Newsletter in September, the MUCF is organising a Workshop on Minor Uses and Speciality Crops in Paris, on 18-20 February 2020. The event will be hosted by the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The MUCF has set up an organising committee comprising representatives of governments from the three regulatory zones: France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, as well as representatives of growers (Copa-Cogeca), the conventional and biocontrol plant protection industry (ECPA and IBMA respectively).

The Workshop will bring together key European stakeholders and policy makers on minor uses and speciality crops. These stakeholders include European institutions, growers' organisations, Ministries, national competent authorities, plant protection industry (conventional and biological), agri-food chain, research institutes, advisory services. The Workshop will give the opportunity to growers' organisations, Member States and other stakeholders to exchange on experience and expectations on minor uses work and on the MUCF. The aim will be to define the future organisation of minor uses work in Europe, to enhance regulatory harmonization, and establish a roadmap containing a list of concrete European actions regarding the future organisation for minor uses work and the role therein of the MUCF, European Commission, Member States and other stakeholders.

The Workshop will be structured in plenary and break-out group sessions.

We expect around 100 participants. Letters for invitation have been circulated, with information on how to register. The programme and outline are available on the MUCF website.

The MUCF is grateful to French Ministry of Agriculture and Food for hosting the Workshop and to members of the committee for their preparatory work. We are looking forward to an outstanding event.

ABIM

The Annual Biocontrol Industry Meeting (ABIM) in Basel was again very well attended this year with more than 1200 participants from 52 countries representing 536 organisations. This clearly demonstrates the growth in interest and activity in the field of biocontrol and bioprotection.

The 2019 Bernard Blum award for Novel Biocontrol Solutions was won by Andermatt Biocontrol for the product Tutavir which contains a *Phthorimaea operculella* granulovirus (PhopGV).

This product is very specific and well suited for population and damage control of the tomato leaf miner. Because of its unique mode of action, the product is an important tool for resistance management in conventional and biological production systems. The two finalists were Biohelp GmbH for the microbial herbicide Ailantex® and Gowan Crop Protection for the botanical fungicide EcoSwing.

Seeds and biocontrol

On 2nd October 2019 the MUCF joined the Workshop "Seeds and Biocontrol" which was held in Paris in the INRA headquarters. The event gathered around 80 participants, from research, biocontrol industry, seed companies, as well as growers' representatives and students.

The event was organised with series of presentations followed by breakout group sessions.

More research is necessary on: (i) microbial communities and their interaction with seeds to improve germination and vigour in the context of biotic and abiotic stresses, (ii) seeds physiology to identify and induce defence mechanisms of seeds, (iii) secondary metabolites in the root system and micro-RNAs for the control of pathogens or to attract of beneficial microorganisms.

The biocontrol industry in France is growing rapidly according to the French Association of Biocontrol Manufacturers (IBMA). Research and development of seed treatments is ongoing or planned for the coming years. There are currently only three seed-applied solutions available on the market in France: CROP SEED (copper), INTEGRAL PRO (*Bacillus amyloliquefaciens* strain MBI 600) and CERALL (*Pseudomonas chloroaphis* strain MA342).

Seeds represent a sustainable way to use plant protection solutions. Solutions can be combined and help to reduce application rates. Concerning the techniques for seed application, points of attention are the quantities and volumes of products applied, the formation of dusts, the stability on seeds (e.g. of microorganisms), and formulations adapted to seed treatments.

In the breakout groups, the main solutions identified to overcome obstacles in the development of innovative seed treatments concern: the increase of scientific knowledge and linking scientific disciplines, the use of decision-making tools and big data, the use and adaptation of the EU Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2009, and use of its low-risk provisions, and more resources for research in France.

CEG-HEG 2020 meetings

The meetings of all Commodity Expert Groups will be held on Tuesday 17 March and Wednesday 18 March 2020 in Brussels. This time no plenary session will be organised as the Workshop will be held in mid-February. The Horizontal Expert Group will meet directly after the minor uses workshop in the afternoon of Wednesday 20 February in Paris. We are looking forward to successful meetings in Brussels.

Interview with Dan Kunkel

Dan Kunkel is the Senior Associate Director at the IR-4 Project. The IR-4 Project is one of the few remaining United States Department of Agriculture's, Interregional Research Projects (number 4) that were started in the early 1960s (1963). It is the only publicly funded minor uses programme in the US. The mission statement of the IR-4 project is: 'to facilitate regulatory approval of sustainable pest management technology for specialty crops and specialty uses to promote public wellbeing.'



Dan Kunkel

What is your background and how did you get involved in the work on minor uses and speciality crops?

Agriculture has always been an important part of my life. I grew up on a farm as a member of a large family. Although we had livestock and grew mostly corn and soybeans, I spent a lot of time in the (large) family garden, which I guess started my interest in minor uses. Spending hours pulling weeds, I thought there must be a better way! And I then completed a Ph.D. at Cornell University in the Department of Fruit and Vegetable Science, focussing on weed science.

What are the main achievements of IR-4 and main barriers and challenges you are facing in the US?

We are most proud of the many new, safer, products (tools) that we have brought to the specialty crop growers. Over my 28 years at IR-4, I have a major move from situations where many growers had limited tools and often considered using off label products, to now having several tools to choose from to combat pests. The products now being used also have much lower risk profiles. Biological products are successfully being integrated into conventional programs at a very rapid rate.

However, this is not to say that US growers do not face any challenges. Invasive pests have been a major problem that can devastate crops as well as long established IPM programs. Other major challenges include pest resistance and bacterial diseases. Trade has also become a struggle, which can prevent growers from using some of the new safer tools too!

Funding to maintain our research programs continues to be a barrier to address grower needs.

At our recent workshop, IR-4 presented nearly 450 grower needs, however there is funding to only address 65 of those needs in our 2020 research program. Therefore, it was a difficult task for the stakeholders to determine which needs were the most critical to address next year.

Without going into details, IR-4 Headquarters (after 56 years) will be moving from the current host institution at Rutgers University, to North Carolina State University, over the next two years. That process will no doubt be disruptive, but the staff are committed to keeping the IR-4 work on track over this period. This move was necessary to maintain the long-term sustainability of the project.

IR-4 is a key player on minor uses at global scale. How do you see the future of minor uses globally? What are the key milestones?

We have already achieved considerable economies in working with the Canadian minor use program, Ag and Ag Food Canada's Pest Management Centre (PMC). Each year IR-4 and PMC cooperate on six or more residue studies. IR-4 has been able to document that this joint work saves IR-4 approximately 500 000 USD in research funds and probably saves the PMC program even more in basic funds. We would like to expand on that cooperation to other parts of the world. We have participated in several of the global pesticide residue projects sponsored by the Standard Trade Development Facility. These sponsored projects with Latin America, Asia and Africa countries to gain capacity in pesticide residue work.

The success of those projects has provided us with confidence that we will be able to work with more countries in the future.

I should also note that the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service has also provided encouragement and funding to pursue cooperation with these countries. In addition, the recently established Minor Use Foundation is starting to acquire funding that can be used to support this joint global work. The Minor Use Foundation is a non-profit making organization and is planning to support and implement cooperative programs to establish global studies to obtain harmonized MRLs; facilitate future Global Minor Use Summits; and collaborate with regional and global Minor Use Stakeholders and organizations to advance specialty crops and minor uses globally. The realization of a global network of minor use programs, working together to address grower needs, is making considerable progress.

What is your view on how the work on minor uses is organised in Europe and the role the MUCF is playing? Do you have any recommendations?

The Minor Use Coordination facility has done a good job of maintaining the commodity groups (expert and steering committees) and the needs have been well defined through the surveys and input by the committees. The funding has been the biggest handicap for the facility to realize its objectives. It is very difficult to meet the objective of “solving minor use needs”, if sufficient funding is not available. The needs have been identified but they will not be solved without sufficient funds. A typical project for IR-4, regardless if it is conventional or biological, may take four or five years to resolve, thus long-term funding is critical. The stakeholders have identified the needs, but they must also be champions in the fund-raising process. Widening the circle of collaboration may help in these efforts as well. For example, suppliers and retailers have a great interest in maintaining a robust supply chain and should take an active role in supporting the MUCF. So much effort has gone into creating the facility, I do hope that it will continue and expand its efforts.

